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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for countries and regions

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to requests made by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions, provides information on humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance given to countries undergoing or emerging from a humanitarian crisis induced by conflict or such natural causes as drought.

The report concludes with the recommendation that the situation in certain of these countries, which have passed the crisis stage and now benefit primarily from reconstruction and development assistance rather than relief aid, should no longer be considered under the agenda item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance".

* A/59/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in compliance with requests made by the Assembly in the resolutions mentioned in section II below and provides information on relief and rehabilitation assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners to countries affected by various types of natural and man-made disasters. In keeping with the Assembly's request to the Secretariat to consolidate and streamline reports wherever possible, the country reports traditionally issued as separate documents under the present agenda item have been consolidated into a single document covering nine countries. The report on assistance to Mozambique, requested by the Assembly in its resolution 57/104 of 25 November 2002, has been issued under the symbol A/59/86-E/2004/69.

II. Humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to individual countries

Angola

2. By its resolution 57/102 of 25 November 2002, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested all countries and international, regional and subregional financial institutions to provide their support to the Government of Angola, with a view to alleviating the humanitarian situation, consolidating peace, democracy and economic stability throughout the country, and permitting the successful implementation of the economic development programmes of the Government.

Humanitarian assistance

3. When the Angolan conflict came to an end in 2002, the humanitarian situation was considered one of the worst in the world. Four million people, roughly one quarter of the population, including internally displaced persons, refugees and former combatants of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and their family members, needed assistance to return home. To deal with the massive return movements, a legal framework based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement[1] was developed. Nearly all of the 3.8 million internally displaced persons have now returned to their area of origin. Those who have not returned have probably decided to remain with their host communities.

4. Approximately 133,000 Angolan refugees returned home in 2003, including 76,000 under the voluntary repatriation operation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR estimates there are still 240,000 Angolan refugees in the primary countries of asylum: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, the Republic of the Congo and Zambia, as well as Botswana and South Africa. As many as 145,000 refugees are expected to return in 2004. However, refugees continue to return spontaneously, mainly in the eastern province of Moxico. Many receive assistance at UNCHR reception centres but travel onwards on foot to areas that are inaccessible to humanitarian partners.

5. Humanitarian partners have been continuously adapting their approach to focus on post-conflict and transition activities. However, the situation is still very worrying for an estimated 1.2 million people located in difficult-to-access areas. The war-devastated infrastructure and the presence of landmines pose major

impediments to humanitarian operations and the return to normal life. The Government has lacked the capacity, funding and equipment to meet the demands for demining. In the first half of 2004, the Government of Angola will develop, with United Nations technical assistance, a national plan for mine action based on identified priorities for the biennium 2004-2005.

6. The Government has made very little progress in rehabilitating the social infrastructure, including the main roads connecting the capital with the interior, which is impeding the recovery of the rural areas. In most provinces, reintegration and community development projects have not yet been launched and public servants do not receive regular salaries. Efforts to support the stabilization of returnee communities through upgrading the delivery of basic services have been frustratingly slow.

7. Key humanitarian coordination functions are being handed over to the appropriate governmental ministries and United Nations agencies in conjunction with an ongoing capacity-building programme. The logical consequence has been the progressive scaling down of the activities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and its transformation into a unit supporting the Resident Coordinator.

8. In order to tackle the transition period, the United Nations decided to use two tools: a consolidated appeal for transition for 2004 and a flexible United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2005-2008. However, a gap is growing as emergency activities near completion while the funding and progress made in the implementation of transitional projects are not yet considered sufficient to cover the needs. By April 2004, the $263 million transitional appeal was approximately 26 per cent funded. In 2003, the last emergency appeal for Angola received $171 million, or 55 per cent of the amount requested.

Social situation

9. Social indicators in Angola remain very low. The under-five mortality rate (250 per 1,000 live births) is the second highest in the world, while the fertility rate of 7.2 is one of the three highest in the world. Adult illiteracy, at 33 per cent, is comparable with the average for sub-Saharan Africa (38 per cent).

10. As part of its drive to improve education, the Government announced in 2003 the recruitment of 29,154 teachers to support the return to school of some 1 million children. This is a step towards achieving the second Millennium Development Goal. However, to be fully successful it will need to be complemented by regular payment of salaries, teacher training courses, school construction, supervision and the provision of school materials.

11. HIV/AIDS is another challenge to sustained development in the country. The current prevalence rate is officially estimated at about 5.5 per cent. However, the lack of statistical information and limited number of surveillance centres means the true rate is probably much higher. The Government, supported by the United Nations, is planning to undertake in 2004 the first national seroprevalence survey. To address the growing threat of HIV, the Government, with United Nations support, formulated and approved in 2004 its National Law and Strategic Plan to Fight against HIV/AIDS, which aims to strengthen national coordination among

governmental, civil society and international partners. The challenge is now to translate the plan into concrete action in order to halt the spread of the virus.

Economic situation

12. Economic growth in Angola has not yet been translated into better lives for its people, especially those in the provinces. According to the poverty reduction strategy paper, 68 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and 26 per cent is extremely poor. The growth of gross domestic product (GDP) in the past three years was, on average, equivalent to the growth in population (3 per cent).

13. The breakdown of the 2004 budget by function shows that the sovereign ministries (defence, security and general administrative services) still consume the largest share of public resources (41.8 per cent). Debt also consumes about 27 per cent of the budget. These figures do not indicate a clear return to post-conflict budget priorities, since expenditures in the health sector (kept at 6 per cent) and education sector (increased from 6 per cent in 2003 to 11 per cent in 2004) remain quite low, even by sub-Saharan Africa standards.

14. The international community has considered the lack of reliable and timely data on public finance a key weakness of the authorities, reflecting insufficient capacity and poor transparency. Efforts to reverse this situation have been recently observed, with the Government allowing the publication of an audit report on the oil sector. Also, for the first time, the Government and the Bretton Woods institutions have reconciled public finance figures.

15. The stabilization of oil prices at around $22.60 per barrel in the past three years, coupled with a gradual reactivation of such non-oil sectors as agriculture and manufacturing, creates a scenario for optimistic projections for growth in GDP. Oil production, of currently over 1 million barrels per day, will increase the sector's share of GDP by 17 per cent in 2004. If achieved, this would result in a significant rise in revenue available to government. However, to have a real impact on the welfare of the population, it should be followed by adequate social programme financing, income redistribution and creation of job opportunities.

16. In January 2004, the Government of Angola approved its poverty reduction strategy paper, outlining 10 priority areas for reconstruction to be addressed by 2006. The Government is also formulating a long-term development programme up to 2025. The United Nations family is focused on fostering the efforts of Government to make a transition towards sustainable development. Negotiations between the Government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been reactivated. The World Bank has official representation in the country and is working on the development of a country assistance strategy for Angola.

Conclusions

17. The level of international assistance granted to Angola since the coming of peace remains inadequate. Donor support needs to be increased and the Government, for its part, should review, through greater accountability and transparency, the way that resources are being used. This two-pronged approach would ensure consolidation of the peace enjoyed thus far and put the country on the path of long-term sustainable development. It is therefore recommended that: (a) the capacity of the Government be strengthened to ensure that it provides leadership in

all development-oriented interventions; (b) Member States give to Angola generously, for, without the necessary resources, permanent peace will be difficult to achieve; and (c) the United Nations continue to build alliances among civil society, government, the private sector and the donor community so that all development responses are coordinated and strategically harmonized.

Comoros

18. By its resolution 58/120 of 17 December 2003, the General Assembly requested Member States, international organizations and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, in the event of an agreement between the Comoros and the authorities of the autonomous islands, and while awaiting the finalization of the Fomboni Agreement by early 2004, to direct their financial and technical assistance towards assisting the most affected sectors of the population during and after the transition period, achieving reconstruction and sustainable development and enabling the country to re-engage with the international financial institutions.

Recent economic and political developments

19. Since the mid-1980s the Comoros has undergone a serious economic and financial crisis marked by very low growth in gross domestic product (GDP), falling investment, the accumulation of considerable arrears in domestic and foreign payments and the appearance of major macroeconomic imbalances. These economic difficulties engendered negative growth in real per capita income, leading to an accelerated impoverishment of the population. Today, it is estimated that approximately 60 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. The high level of cash poverty goes hand in hand with poor human development performance.

20. The economic crisis was aggravated in 1997 by a political and institutional crisis related to the secession of Anjouan Island and, two years later, by a political and institutional crisis occurring when the institutions of the Islamic Federal Republic were abolished by a military coup d'état. The Comoros would have to wait until December 2001 before a new constitution was adopted in accordance with the Fomboni Agreement of February of the same year. Specifically, the new Constitution limited itself to defining the exclusive domain of the central power and entrusted the future Assembly of the Union with the task of adopting the organic laws defining the scope of the islands' prerogatives and exclusive jurisdiction and those shared by the Union and the islands.

21. This incomplete Constitution triggered keen jurisdictional disputes once the presidents of the islands and the Union were elected, particularly concerning questions of public funds and security, and the country was plunged once more into a serious political crisis that paralysed the creation of constitutional institutions. It was in the context of this paralysis of process that the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/120.

Initiatives on the part of the international community

22. Pursuant to that resolution, the international community stepped up its mediation efforts and succeeded in bringing the Comorian parties to the negotiating table. The result was the Beit Salama Agreement (Moroni Agreement) of

20 December 2003, signed by the President of the Union of the Comoros and the presidents of the autonomous islands, whereby the Comorian parties reaffirmed their commitment to the Fomboni Agreement and their determination to complete the establishment of the constitutional institutions. The Agreement laid down the interim provisions that were to govern the Comorian entity until the establishment of the national assembly. It provided expressly for the involvement of the international community in the administration during the period of transition, through a flexible mediation and oversight mechanism based on the establishment of an agreement monitoring committee and a harmonization committee. Both committees were to be composed of representatives of the Comorian parties and the international community.

23. Following the signature of the Moroni Agreement, the international community, in line with General Assembly resolution 58/120, paragraph 8, met in Paris on 21 January 2004 and decided to establish a trust fund to support the transition in the Comoros. The mobilization and administration of the resources in the context of the trust fund, whose estimated allocation was slightly more than US$ 5 million, were entrusted to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

24. Thanks to this mobilization on the part of the international community, the country was able to formulate a consolidated budget in 2004, with a view to reopening dialogue with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to negotiate a formal programme with that financial institution. In addition, elections to the island and Union assemblies were held, under appropriate conditions and on the scheduled dates in March and April 2004.

25. The institutional instability and political turbulence afflicting the Comoros prevented its leaders from drawing up and implementing a coherent development policy. Those conditions also led to a wait-and-see attitude on the part of sponsors and other development partners, most of whom remained on the sidelines. This in turn caused a downward trend in development aid to the country. Under such circumstances, the coordinated assistance of the United Nations system, in conjunction with the individual or collective efforts of the specialized agencies to mobilize resources on behalf of the Comoros, proved crucial to the country's recovery and development.

26. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/120, the assistance provided by United Nations agencies to the Comoros was reinforced by relevant initiatives so that programme delivery frameworks might be adapted to the new institutional situations, thus achieving greater efficiency or creating conditions conducive to the involvement of other partners in the country's development.

27. Accordingly, the United Nations system supported the launch of a national process to draw up a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), in which some of the country's other partners, notably the World Bank, were involved. The document reflects a consensus with respect to growth and places the fight against poverty at the centre of development concerns. It should open the door to a number of mechanisms for financing the economy and setting the country on the best footing to prepare for the next donor round table on funding for national development. In addition, the existence of this frame of reference increases the possibilities of working with United Nations agencies at the operational level in support of the most important national development goals.

Conclusions

28. The long and multifaceted crisis in the Comoros has left the country economically bereft, socially vulnerable and institutionally fragile. The Comorian national report for 2003 on the Millennium Development Goals shows clearly that the Comoros is not advancing towards the agreed goals, but is actually falling behind.

29. The mobilization of the international community has allowed the country to resume the process of national reconciliation. Elections to the island assemblies and the Assembly of the Union of the Comoros marked an important milestone on the country's road to recovery. Nevertheless, a number of challenges remain.

30. One of the greatest challenges is, of course, the creation of a new and viable institutional framework; another is the re-establishment of effective cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions so that the country has access to appropriate development financing mechanisms. In that connection, the country is eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and has prepared an interim PRSP, but in the absence of a formal IMF programme, it may not be able to take advantage of debt relief. Likewise, plans to hold a successful donor round table are linked to a re-establishment of normal relations with the IMF.

31. Today, the Comoros is greatly in need of multifaceted support from the international community if it is to pursue national reconciliation and reconstruction. The current national reconciliation process — which was significantly advanced by the holding of elections in March and April 2004 — remains a challenge, in terms of continuing the dialogue between the Comorian parties, in order to complete the institutional structure without delay and deal firmly with urgent development problems. In this connection, it would be useful to appeal to donor countries and organizations, and to the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations, to continue and to step up their aid to the country as it recovers.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

32. By its resolution 58/123, of 17 December 2003, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to keep under review the humanitarian and economic situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to promoting participation in and support for a programme of financial and material assistance to the country to enable it to meet urgent needs in terms of economic recovery and reconstruction.

33. This report, unlike those of previous years, will concentrate on issues of economic recovery, national reconstruction and the fight against HIV/AIDS. The Secretary-General submits regular reports to the Security Council on political, military, security and humanitarian issues. (For the most recent reports, see documents S/2003/1098 and S/2004/251.)

Humanitarian situation

34. The humanitarian situation improved from the end of 2003 through the beginning of 2004. Humanitarian organizations were able to set up operations in the rural zones in the east of the country thanks to the improved security situation. Displaced persons began to return to their homes in the provinces of North Kivu and

South Kivu and Maniema. However, the conflicts that broke out in Bukavu in June 2004 forced many organizations temporarily to suspend their operations, thereby depriving more than 80 per cent of the eastern region of assistance. While operations resumed thereafter, instability and lack of progress in the transition process might lead to a reduction in humanitarian operations.

35. The global level of financing for humanitarian operations is insufficient. In fact, contributions to the Consolidated Appeal Process in 2003 came to $108 million, against a budget of $229 million. By mid-2004, contributions reached $56 million, against a budget of $160 million.

Socio-economic environment

36. The positive growth observed beginning in 2001 continued in 2003. Estimates by the Central Bank show a GDP growth rate of 3.4 per cent in 2003 as compared with 3.1 per cent in 2002. Such growth derived mainly from the extractive, transport and communications industries.

37. On 30 March 2004 the National Assembly adopted the State budget of 482,485,000,000 Congolese francs, or $1,168,244,552, for 2004. Performance of this budget will depend upon the mobilization of external resources, which are needed to cover 52.9 per cent of the funding. At the end of September 2003 the trade balance showed a deficit of $249 million, as compared with a surplus of $319.9 million at the end of December 2002, owing to a 16.6 per cent increase in exports at a time when imports grew by 79.3 per cent.

38. Operations to pay off arrears and cancel debt permitted the outstanding debt to be reduced to $11,511.2 million by 31 March 2003. Debt service arrears, after debt restructuring by the Paris Club, were set at $1,862.27 million. These arrears derive from sums owed to creditors with whom bilateral negotiations have not yet been concluded.

39. The social situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has scarcely improved during the period under review, while the most recent data available are for 2001. It is worth reiterating that 73 per cent of the population are in a situation of food insecurity; infant and child mortality stand, respectively, at 126 and 213 per 1,000; the maternal death rate is 1,289 deaths per 100,000 live births; 38 per cent of children under five years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition; the net primary school enrolment rate is 51.7 per cent. An already alarming health situation is aggravated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic which continues to spread. A strike by civil servants, whose salaries are below a living wage, has also affected the social situation. Low salaries constitute one of the principal constraints on the administration's ability to provide basic social services. The absence of a functioning social protection system means that a large part of the population is made up of vulnerable people, in particular retirees, widows and orphans, senior citizens, handicapped persons and children in the workforce.

Economic challenges and challenges to good governance and capacity-building

40. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued to face the challenge posed by the overhaul of its basic socio-economic structures, which are totally dilapidated and quite insufficient, in terms of both quality and quantity, to meet the needs of the people or the business community. In response to this challenge the

Government intends to implement an expanded Emergency Multisector Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project (EMRRP), an ambitious socio-economic investment programme commensurate with the scale of the country. The funding required to implement the programme comes to approximately $7 billion, a sum outside the reach of national capacity which therefore requires support from partners.

41. In terms of governance and capacity-building, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to bear the weight of its institutional and human resources weaknesses, in particular in public administration and the judicial system, where inefficiency hinders national productivity. The country must reform the public administration to make it more capable of providing the services expected by the people and the business community. The same applies to the judicial system, whose proper functioning is necessary to ensure respect for human rights and a secure business environment.

Support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the United Nations system

42. During the period under review, the United Nations system has contributed to the economic revival and the reconstruction of the country through its actions to rehabilitate social and community infrastructures, promote income-generating activities in rural areas, develop microcredit and distribute the equipment permitting the resumption of trade between provinces previously cut off from each other. In addition, it played an important role in drawing up the PRSP, specifically supporting attention to the employment dimension both in reconstruction programmes and in the PRSP. The role of the Bretton Woods institutions should be highlighted, given their constant support for the improvement of the macroeconomic framework, the administration of public funds and the promotion of the private sector, all of which are indispensable to strong and sustained growth.

43. The United Nations system has continued and intensified its multifaceted support for the national programme to fight HIV/AIDS. The revitalization of the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS resulted in the proliferation of joint initiatives to strengthen coordination and leadership at the highest level and in a greater mobilization of resources. The Government was thus able to call on the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to provide $112 million in funds, to which the World Bank donated an equivalent sum through its Multi Country HIV-AIDS Programme for Africa.

44. Finally, while performing their activities of advocacy, institutional strengthening and partnership promotion, the agencies of the United Nations system have also undertaken and developed catalytic initiatives in the following spheres: promotion of safe sex among young people; care for orphans using a non-institutional approach; monitoring of the epidemic; prevention of mother-to-child transmission; and HIV/AIDS prevention within the uniformed services and among refugees.

45. The United Nations system was involved in developing an interim capacity-building strategy intended to relaunch the essential administrative functions of programme delivery and government-sponsored reform. It also supported a multi-donor mission to assess the state of the judicial system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so as to reorient and amplify ongoing activities relating to training of personnel, education of the population on matters related to justice, capacity-

building among non-governmental organizations and other national actors, and timely provision of the relevant equipment.

Conclusions

46. Although the economy began to experience positive growth again in 2002 and 2003, it is still not strong enough to generate the resources needed for the enormous task of national reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the very low level of public expenditure on investment does not permit the construction of a suitable base from which to relaunch the economy. Even if private sector actors visiting from abroad have shown an interest in investing in the country, their investments will be ineffectual unless there is a minimum of economic infrastructure. There are also political uncertainties that will not be dispelled until free, democratic elections are held. In other words, public investment will continue as the engine of economic growth. It should therefore be substantially increased, while the elements that limit the country's ability to absorb it are reduced. In addition, job creation must be put at the centre of the investment policy, to guarantee a revitalization of domestic demand. External debt will continue to weigh heavily on national resources, meaning that the qualification requirements under the HIPC initiative must be swiftly met, in particular by finalizing the PRSP during 2005 and implementing it effectively.

Ethiopia

47. By its resolution 58/24 of 5 December 2003, the General Assembly, inter alia, called upon the international community to respond in a timely manner to the joint 2004 appeal of the United Nations and the Government of Ethiopia for emergency assistance for Ethiopia, covering food and non-food needs, as well as to the urgent needs of programme interventions for 2004, aimed at addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity, and issues of recovery, asset protection and the sustainable development of the affected areas.

Humanitarian needs and response

48. Ethiopia experienced a major drought in 2002, which subsequently caused widespread acute food insecurity by late 2002 and 2003, principally affecting six regions of the country (the Afar, Tigray and Amhara regions, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples region, and Oromiya and Somali regions). By May 2003, the crisis had affected 13.2 million people directly, the highest number of people ever affected by drought in Ethiopia. The problem of HIV/AIDS added to the complexity of the crisis.

49. The 2003 crisis required the mobilization of a huge humanitarian effort by the Government and the international community. In fact, this was the largest relief operation ever undertaken in Africa. The international community pledged over 1.8 million tons of food, of which 1.5 million tons were shipped to Djibouti during 2003 and transported inland to hub destinations in Ethiopia. The World Food Programme (WFP) played a major role in monitoring and supporting this logistics operation and in tracking deliveries and contributions. These are astounding quantities and far exceeded the logistics capacities that were thought to exist. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which collected data on

emergency non-food contributions, reported that approximately $117 million was provided by donors for health and nutrition, control and treatment of malaria, immunization activities, agriculture (seed and livestock health), water and sanitation and for coordination activities, monitoring and capacity-building, including training on therapeutic feeding and food aid targeting. In all, approximately 90 per cent of the humanitarian requirements were met by donors, including private contributors. This was done through concerted advocacy, transparency, cooperation and coordination among governmental donors, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other humanitarian partners. In terms of mobilization of relief resources, the joint Government and United Nations appeal was a key to the successful response to the emergency.

50. Mass migrations were prevented by food aid distributions from over 1,200 centres managed by the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission and non-governmental organizations. Over 13 million people were reached, albeit initially with reduced food rations. In addition, support was provided by WFP and UNHCR to 128,000 refugees in the west and east of the country and by WFP and the Commission to approximately 150,000 internally displaced persons in the east and north.

51. Health interventions to reduce mortality rates from communicable disease among people weakened by malnutrition were rapidly accelerated. The Ministry of Health, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and non-governmental organizations, initiated a massive measles vaccination and vitamin A distribution campaign that covered 21 million children in 2003 and another 10 million by mid-2004. The Ministry of Water Resources and its partners assisted 1.8 million people with improved access to potable water facilities. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, assisted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and non-governmental partners, distributed seeds to 300,000 of the most destitute households. Non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Health, with the support of UNICEF, operated more than 40 therapeutic feeding centres that provided emergency feeding to more than 20,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition, saving more than 95 per cent of those admitted for treatment.

52. The rains in 2003 were significantly better than those in 2002, and a crop surplus was produced. However, many pockets of chronic and acute food insecurity remained, requiring a further appeal for humanitarian assistance in 2004. It was also decided that, until a longer-term food security safety net programme was in place, both the chronically food insecure and those in acute need of humanitarian assistance should be covered by the humanitarian appeal in 2004.

53. Consequently, in December 2003, the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations and humanitarian partners appealed for $85 million of non-food assistance and 871,000 tons of food to meet humanitarian needs in 2004. An estimated 7.2 million people, about 10.5 per cent of the total population, are in need of assistance. Thanks to a carry-over of food and other commodities from 2003 and an early response by several donors, assistance efforts have continued with no major interruption. As at the end of June 2004, the net food requirements for Ethiopia were 79.1 per cent funded, with additional pledges under discussion. Non-food items were only 38 per cent funded, reflecting the general imbalance across the appeal in favour of food.

54. Based on the preliminary results of crop and pastoral area assessments for July 2004, there may be significant additional humanitarian needs in certain parts of the country owing to the much less than normal rains during the short rainy season during the period from March to May. This has affected crop-producing areas and lowland pastoralist areas in the east and south of the country.

55. There are also increasing concerns over security and the potential for conflict in certain areas of the country in 2004, particularly in the Gambella region, bordering on the Sudan, and in the Somali region, bordering on Somalia. Insecurity in these regions has restricted access by United Nations agencies, affecting the monitoring of refugee camp operations in Gambella and affecting United Nations monitoring of food and other relief distributions in the Somali region. United Nations agencies continue to monitor the Ethiopia and Eritrea border demarcation process, and remain prepared to assist with humanitarian and recovery assistance to populations in the area that may be affected once the demarcation has been implemented.

Implementation of longer-term solutions

56. Millions of the increasingly destitute rural population of Ethiopia are unable to produce their basic needs from their degraded arable plots and communal pastures. During the height of the 2003 crisis and response, the Government and development and humanitarian partners established a food security programme, the New Coalition for Livelihood and Food Security in Ethiopia, to find an effective solution to the question of food insecurity. This was linked to the sustainable development poverty reduction programme of Ethiopia. The Coalition initiative is aimed at addressing the challenges faced by 5 million chronically affected people and an additional 10 million people faced with acute food insecurity in the most vulnerable districts in the country.

57. The Coalition developed an ambitious programme framework which encompasses social mobilization for self-reliance, voluntary resettlement of approximately 400,000 food-insecure families to more productive areas of the country, improved food production techniques, water harvesting and conservation, land certification, afforestation, increased access to health services, empowerment of communities at the district level and a productive safety net programme for 5 million chronically food insecure people, and which links food or cash assistance to productive community public works aimed at improving longer-term food security.

58. Voluntary resettlement and water harvesting activities, supported principally by governmental resources, were begun in 2003. The resettlement programme ran smoothly in some areas, but significant problems were experienced early in 2004 in the Oromiya region owing to the large number of families resettled (approximately 250,000 people in 2003/04) and a lack of resources to provide planned initial assistance. The Government, several donors and United Nations agencies (WFP, UNICEF and FAO) have provided additional resources to address the lack of supplementary food for children and insufficiencies in medical supplies, health services, therapeutic feeding and the provision of seeds. By mid-2004, many of the problems at larger sites had improved significantly. Meanwhile, the productive safety net programme is under development, and the Government plans to begin its implementation in 2005.

Conclusions

59. The success of the 2003 relief operation in preventing a repeat of the widespread deaths and suffering experienced in the 1984/85 famine, has been recognized as a major achievement. This achievement was accredited to: (a) unprecedented contributions by donors, who expeditiously provided cash and food for relief operations, and by the action taken by United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, the Red Cross Movement and other partners; (b) effective early warning systems on the effects of rainfall and shortfalls in production; (c) effective coordination at the federal, regional and weredas (district) levels; (d) the early response of the Government which contributed 45,000 metric tons of wheat; (e) an increasingly improved logistics capacity, which was crucial to operational success.

60. The fact that such huge numbers of people required humanitarian assistance in order to survive is a warning of future risks and increasing vulnerabilities in Ethiopia. Drought has become a chronic hazard in Ethiopia that is related to the erosion of the natural resource base caused by the pressure of high population growth, deforestation, desiccation of water resources, insufficient family farming plots and climate change. Recurrent droughts are resulting in an increasing vulnerability of the population as people sell household assets in an effort to cope. This is a downward spiral that needs to be addressed immediately through development efforts.

61. As efforts to address longer-term food insecurity in the country progress, shocks will continue to occur in the future, with the potential to place hundreds of thousands or even millions of the rural poor in acute need of humanitarian assistance. Consequently, the Government and the international community must remain vigilant in supporting and strengthening emergency management capacities and providing humanitarian relief, but in a way that supports longer-term solutions to food and livelihood insecurity.

Liberia

62. By its resolution 57/151 of 16 December 2002, the General Assembly, inter alia, invited all States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance, as appropriate, to Liberia to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for the promotion of peace, regional security and socio-economic development.

63. After 14 years of conflict in Liberia, increased national and international pressure contributed to the resignation of the President Charles Taylor regime and his departure from the country in August 2003. On 18 August, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States, was signed in Accra and provided for a transitional government and elections in October 2005. The subsequent formation of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, headed by Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant and the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in accordance with Security Council resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003, paved the way for the restoration of sustainable peace and stability in the country.

64. The security situation in the country has improved significantly since the signing of the Accra peace accord in August 2003. With the deployment of additional troops from Ethiopia on 30 July, UNMIL troop strength as at August 2004 stood at 14,083 (i.e., about 95 per cent of the authorized strength of 15,000 military personnel). In addition, 791 United Nations civilian police personnel have been deployed to 23 sites up-country, which will eventually be increased by two additional sites.

65. An inter-agency consolidated appeal for $137 million was launched in November 2003, followed by an inter-agency needs assessment in preparation for the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Liberia, held in February 2004, which called for an additional $487.7 million for the recovery and reconstruction of Liberia for the biennium 2004-2005. Some $520 million was pledged at the Conference towards the country's reconstruction and humanitarian needs.

Disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration

66. Between December 2003 and August 2004, UNMIL disarmed some 65,000 combatants and collected some 20,000 weapons and over 5 million pieces of ammunition. UNMIL is working closely with the United Nations agencies and donors in implementing a rehabilitation and reintegration programme for some 53,000 ex-combatants, including an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 former child soldiers. UNDP administers the trust fund for disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration activities with a projected financial need of $66.6 million. The trust fund has so far received $13.5 million of the $18.3 million pledged, including the UNDP's contribution of $2.5 million. In this respect, failure to provide adequate social and economic support for ex-combatants poses major risks to peace-building.

Governance and the rule of law

67. Security Council resolution 1509 (2003) includes a mandate for the establishment of the rule of law in ways that respect human rights, restore national authority, reform the police and judiciary, facilitate humanitarian action and assist the transition to democratic governance. UNDP has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Governance Reform Commission, outlining how both agencies should collaborate in the implementation of the Commission's mandate.

68. The training and capacity-building of judges and prosecutors, as well as the re-establishment of a comprehensive corrections system in accordance with international standards, are key elements of the UNMIL strategy to rebuild the rule of law in Liberia. Furthermore, the restoration of effective civil law enforcement agencies as part of a functioning executive branch is an essential prerequisite for creating a safe and enabling environment for peace and security, the protection of human rights and the conduct of free and fair elections.

Humanitarian assistance, recovery and reintegration

69. It is estimated that there are approximately 1.7 million people in Liberia still in need of humanitarian assistance. The responsibility for coordinating the provision of assistance to these people (of whom an estimated 300,000 are living in 21 camps for internally displaced persons) has been assumed by the UNMIL Humanitarian

Coordination Section following the recent integration of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Liberia into the Humanitarian Coordination Section. Since December 2003, more than 50,000 Liberian refugees have returned spontaneously, many of whom have ended up in camps for the internally displaced or in returnee camps around Monrovia administered by UNHCR.

70. The United Nations Children's Fund continues to work with the Ministry of Education to return 750,000 children to school under the back-to-school campaign. Since June 2003, UNICEF and its partners have immunized more than 1.24 million children between the ages of 6 months and 15 years. United Nations agencies and partners have delivered food assistance to about 380,000 beneficiaries, including 60,000 children. The chlorination of open wells, benefiting 400,000 people, has contributed to the reduction of cholera cases and the prevention of fatalities. Additional humanitarian support provided includes the measles vaccination campaign for more than 600,000 children between the ages of 6 months and 15 years.

71. Life expectancy at birth rose from an estimated 41 years in 1960 to 54 years between 1985 and 1990, and then fell to an estimated 39 years during the war. Communicable diseases, especially malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and measles, are the major cause of morbidity and mortality, especially among children under five years of age. WHO, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations concerned with health are intensifying efforts to manage and prevent outbreaks of disease, including cholera, yellow fever and recently reported cases of Lassa fever, which are serious concerns, particularly in the overcrowded camps for internally displaced persons.

72. Widespread sexual exploitation and gender-based violence during the conflict have contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS, whose prevalence is estimated at 10 to 12 per cent. UNDP, WHO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are supporting education campaigns and communication and dissemination initiatives aimed at creating awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic among the population, including the ex-combatants who are taking part in the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process. Moreover, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has allocated $24 million for the prevention of the three diseases in Liberia, from which $7.6 million is earmarked for HIV/AIDS.

73. The water and sanitation facilities in Liberia are in a very poor state of repair. Appropriate hygiene practices, together with access to safe water supplies, will significantly improve the health of the Liberian population. Within this context, the county resource centres initiative, led by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), is using an integrated community-based approach that facilitates the implementation of quick-impact, labour-intensive activities. This initiative will provide employment opportunities and engage demobilized ex-combatants, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups in the production of building construction materials.

74. The protracted conflict severely affected agricultural production in Liberia. It is estimated that food production will be considerably less than that required in 2004. Currently, food aid is planned for an estimated 10,000 returning families and 60,000 resident farming families. WFP and its partners have helped to stabilize the food security situation in Monrovia and are currently extending distribution to

accessible counties outside the city. The food pipeline, however, remains critical, and WFP expects there to be serious shortfalls in all commodities during the period from August to December 2004 unless cash donations are made available for additional purchases.

Cross-cutting issues of gender, protection and environment

75. The Security Council, in resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, reaffirmed the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in post-conflict peace-building, and in resolution 1509 (2003), in particular, addressed the use of gender-based violence against women and girls as a tool of warfare in Liberia. In this respect, United Nations agencies are actively encouraging the integration of gender issues at the national level (Ministry of Gender and Development) and supporting the work of local and international women's organizations in Liberia.

76. Of the estimated 250,000 Liberians who have lost their lives since 1989, at least one half were civilian non-combatants. After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, protection issues continue to dominate the concerns of internally displaced persons and the general civilian population. A protection steering committee has been established to raise the profile of protection issues and to address the current protection and human rights crisis in Liberia as an integral concern throughout the reconstruction and rehabilitation process.

77. Revitalization of the forestry industry could have a significant impact on the economic recovery of Liberia. However, the use of resources from that industry for arms trafficking and fuelling regional instability has prompted the Security Council to impose sanctions on the trade in timber from Liberia. UNMIL and its partners in UNDP, FAO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are assisting the National Transitional Government in creating the conditions that could lead to a lifting of the sanctions by establishing a framework for good governance and promoting the sustainable development of the country's natural resources.

Conclusions

78. Liberia is slowly overcoming the legacy of war and destruction. However, it can only succeed over the long term if peace prevails throughout the West African subregion, in particular in the neighbouring countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. If not addressed urgently and decisively, the serious security, humanitarian and development challenges facing the country could endanger not only efforts to restore sustainable peace but also regional stability. In that connection, the renewed commitment of the Security Council to promote a regional approach to the ongoing peace processes in West Africa is a welcome development. The restoration of lasting peace in Liberia also requires that special attention be paid to other major cross-cutting problems, including the lack of economic opportunity and the disruption of livelihoods as a result of population displacement. Job opportunities must be created for the large number of unemployed, often illiterate young men who are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.

Malawi

79. By its resolution 58/26 of 5 December 2003, the General Assembly stressed, inter alia, the need to further strengthen international cooperation in the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance in support of the efforts of Malawi to deal with natural disasters in all their phases, from relief and mitigation to development, including through the provision of adequate resources, and encourages the effective use of multilateral mechanisms.

Background

80. Of the 177 countries and territories listed in the UNDP human development index for 2004, Malawi is ranked 165. Sixty-five per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, 33 per cent of the population is malnourished and infant mortality levels are among the highest in the world. Thirty-four per cent of households are headed by women.

81. Food insecurity is endemic. The acute crisis experienced by the country over the past two years, caused by flooding and drought, has been further compounded by the increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Moreover, national efforts to control the spread of HIV/AIDS are undermined by a declining capacity in the social service sectors. HIV/AIDS in Malawi is characterized by continuous high prevalence, especially among women and young people. Prevalence rates among adults between the ages of 15 and 49 years are estimated at 14.4 per cent. AIDS-related diseases account for some 70 per cent of hospital inpatient deaths. It is estimated that 46 per cent of all new adult infections affect young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years and that the infection rate among young girls is four to six times greater than among boys. Life expectancy at birth has dropped from 48 in 1990 to 40 in 2000. According to the National AIDS Commission, orphans are now estimated to number approximately 400,000 aged from 0 to 15 years, and child-headed households are on the increase. In sum, the humanitarian needs in Malawi, as in several countries in the southern African region, are a function of the combined effects of HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and weakened capacity for governance.

82. The macroeconomic environment has deteriorated since mid-2002 and has been characterized by high inflation (9.5 per cent in October 2003) and high and volatile real interest and exchange rates. This has compounded the effect of the low purchasing power of the majority of Malawians, especially in rural communities. However, in October 2003, confidence in the Government's commitment to economic reform encouraged IMF to resume its support to Malawi. The new Government, under the leadership of President Bingu Mutharika, elected in May 2004, has further signalled its commitment to the economic reform agenda by bringing down interest rates and improving conditions for foreign investment.

83. During the past 12 months, Malawi has successfully emerged from an acute humanitarian crisis. This has been achieved as a consequence of a massive international food assistance effort, a significantly improved harvest in 2003 and effective Government policies and interventions which have helped to stabilize prices of staples. Despite these successes, lives and livelihoods for the majority remain fragile at best. Ongoing targeted food aid remains critical along with other humanitarian safety net measures to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

Government response

84. The Government has taken a number of steps to deal with the factors contributing to the country's vulnerability to food insecurity, including undertaking a review of the land tenure systems and the use of estate land with a view to reforming land resource policy. It has developed a national policy for water resources management to enhance the development of water resources in an integrated manner, as well as a national disaster management action plan. It has begun to integrate disaster mitigation into all sectoral planning and to decentralize disaster management to local assemblies in accordance with the Local Government Act.

85. The response of the Government to the humanitarian needs in the country has been led by the Department of Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs. All partners, including the United Nations system, have been working in close collaboration with the Department to support relief activities. Following its declaration of emergency in February 2002, the Government presented an appeal for a national food crisis recovery programme that would address food security in the short and medium term. The Government established the Joint Food Security Task Force, with representation from the Government, parastatals, donors, civil society and the private sector. These developments have greatly enhanced coordination and cooperation between the Government and its assistance partners and contributed to the effective utilization of human, financial and capital resources.

United Nations response

86. Given the continued fragility of the food security situation and the recognition that vulnerability was being further compounded by HIV/AIDS, the United Nations launched a second consolidated appeal for southern Africa which included needs for Malawi. The appeal was launched in July 2003 and covered the period to the end of June 2004. While the appeal took stock of the significant increase in the availability of food in the country following the improved harvest, food assistance remained prominent. The appeal requested donors to provide food assistance for approximately 600,000 beneficiaries. In addition, United Nations agencies sought funds to provide agricultural input for the most vulnerable farming families, as well as emergency nutrition, water, sanitation and health interventions and capacity support for emergency response, preparedness and mitigation.

87. The response from the international community has been broadly positive, particularly with respect to food and nutritional needs. However, contributions to support the needed social service interventions in health, education and child protection have been limited to a mere 20 per cent of the amount requested.

88. Food aid has been directed to the most vulnerable segments of the population, including HIV/AIDS-affected households and individuals. Food assistance has also been used to promote primary school attendance by girls and orphans in food-insecure areas. Supplementary feeding has been provided to moderately and severely malnourished children under five years of age, the caretakers of severely malnourished children and to malnourished pregnant and lactating women.

89. Particular attention has been given to providing support for capacity-building within the Government for more effective disaster and emergency management. UNDP, in collaboration with the World Bank, has supported the Government in

disaster preparedness and relief with co-financing from the national disaster management plan for Malawi. With support from WHO and UNICEF, capacity has been developed to undertake nutritional surveys and health surveillance. These systems have helped to target needed nutritional support programmes and to reduce considerably the impact of the seasonal cholera outbreaks.

Conclusions

90. As the consolidated appeal for the region comes to an end, the United Nations system will continue to work with the Government to address the triple threat, using both humanitarian and development interventions. Efforts are being made at the national and regional levels to increase national capacity to cope not only with natural disasters but also numerous development challenges.

91. The United Nations system will support the Government in its disaster management efforts, including the development of a national disaster management plan and accompanying operations manual, the preparation of contingency plans for all vulnerable districts, the elaboration of an emergency recovery programme that integrates issues of HIV/AIDS and other opportunistic infections, and in promoting the involvement of bilateral and other funding partners to address vulnerability in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Serbia and Montenegro

92. By its resolution 57/148 of 16 December 2002, the General Assembly, inter alia, called upon all States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other relevant bodies to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, while seeking durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now known as Serbia and Montenegro) and to support the Government in its efforts to ensure the transition from relief to the long-term goals of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

Major socio-economic developments

93. During the reporting period (July 2002 to June 2004), Serbia and Montenegro witnessed a steady decline in humanitarian aid. A broad consensus exists that the country is no longer in a humanitarian crisis situation but has moved towards stabilization and economic development. Within this context, the United Nations has not issued a consolidated humanitarian appeal for the whole of south-east Europe, including Serbia and Montenegro, since 2002.

94. Finding permanent solutions and protecting the basic human rights of the approximately 350,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and the 230,000 internally displaced persons from Kosovo living in Serbia and Montenegro was a priority for the humanitarian community in the period under review. Significant progress was made in finding durable solutions for refugees, focusing mostly on repatriation to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and on local integration by means of housing, income-generation and vocational training programmes. Regrettably, national policies for comprehensive durable solutions for the internally displaced based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have not yet been developed. Security issues, housing reconstruction and unresolved property claims in Kosovo remained key impediments to the return of internally

displaced persons. Ethnic violence against the Serb and other non-Albanian populations in Kosovo in March 2004 posed additional threats to returnees, the number of which has been negligible to date.

95. Political uncertainties stemming from the transformation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in February 2003 and the assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister in March 2003 contributed to a slowdown in the reform process and revealed the fragility of the country's transition. In such circumstances, a number of development strategies aimed at assisting different categories of vulnerable people, most notably the poverty reduction strategy papers for both Serbia and Montenegro (December 2003), the Serbian national strategy for resolving the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons (June 2002) and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Roma integration and empowerment strategy (December 2002) remained without real implementation, thus leaving the most vulnerable without adequate assistance before long-term development strategies could produce viable results.

96. Notwithstanding the outburst of ethnic violence in March 2004, the pace of transition in Kosovo quickened during the reporting period and a functioning administration has been put in place, largely run by the provisional institutions of self-government elected in 2002. In this context, United Nations agencies have started to concentrate their efforts on longer-term development challenges, such as strengthening democratic institutions, improving public administration and creating enabling conditions to support local economic development and to achieve higher employment.

Assistance provided by the United Nations system and its partners

97. The basic food aid provided by WFP and UNHCR to vulnerable refugees and by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to internally displaced persons remained the most significant component of the humanitarian assistance provided in Serbia and Montenegro. As this assistance was phased out, the remaining eligible beneficiaries were integrated into the local social welfare system, with international agencies providing residual support to the most vulnerable.

98. The United Nations Development Programme supported the reform of the Serbian Ministry of Social Affairs, enabling it to improve its coordination of services to municipalities hosting refugee and internally displaced populations, and enabling the substantial overhaul of the pension administration system. UNDP also provided support for capacity-building in the coordination of the poverty reduction strategy paper processes in both Montenegro and Serbia.

99. Finding durable housing solutions for refugees with the closure of collective centres was one of the major activities of UNHCR. Assistance varied from the provision of building materials to the construction of housing for refugees leaving collective centres. UN-Habitat launched a pilot programme that will provide 670 new dwellings for the neediest beneficiaries and at the same time boost the capacity of local governments in their development planning and municipal information systems. UNDP provided accommodation and home-care services for 130 elderly refugees and displaced persons in three Serbian municipalities. The main focus of activity in Kosovo has been on inter-ethnic reconciliation among and between both returning minority communities and the majority Kosovo Albanians, and on shelter rehabilitation and reconstruction.

100. Self-reliance programmes helped refugees, internally displaced persons and other marginalized populations to build sustainable livelihoods. UNHCR provided non-commercial microloans for microbusinesses, in kind grants and vocational training for refugees and internally displaced persons. FAO continued to implement programmes to assist economic recovery within areas of rural poverty and refugees who opted to integrate into Serbian local communities, with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of business-oriented farming. Linked to the UNHCR resettlement project, FAO also facilitated access to arable land for long-term refugees, and the adoption of profitable agricultural activities. UNDP implemented a large-scale rapid employment programme in southern Serbia, creating over 6,000 jobs for vulnerable minority groups and ex-combatants and promoting inter-ethnic cooperation in over 155 subprojects that have since been succeeded by a more expansive municipal improvement and recovery programme.

101. In the health sector, UNDP provided support for capacity-building in the Serbian Ministry of Health, while UNICEF continued to support the strengthening of primary health-care services, particularly those geared to women and children. UNICEF and WHO supported the Government in maintaining high immunization coverage and ensuring the country was certified as polio-free in 2002. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) assisted in the establishment of the republican AIDS commissions in Serbia and in Montenegro, with special attention given to encouraging young people to play an active role in HIV prevention. In Kosovo, an inter-agency HIV/AIDS theme group composed of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO has been established to assist the Ministry of Health in its mid-term HIV/AIDS prevention strategy.

102. The United Nations Development Programme also provided support for the capacity-building efforts of the Serbian Ministry of Education to promote institutional outreach and change management. UNICEF focused on the improvement of educational policies and on reform. It also addressed exclusion and the development of more inclusive educational programmes for Roma children. Educational materials and clothing were provided for the most affected children. Emergency repairs of schools, as well as furniture and heating, were provided for most rural areas.

103. The International Organization for Migration facilitated the resettlement of refugees in third countries, assisted internally displaced persons in vocational training and employment and catered to the needs of vulnerable elderly Roma survivors of Nazi persecution. Victims of trafficking were provided with a range of humanitarian, medical, and psychosocial, counselling and legal support. Foreign migrants and national migrants from Western Europe were assisted in returning to and reintegrating into their countries of origin. The International Organization for Migration in Kosovo concentrated on facilitating returns to the country and, as part of this process, provided authorities of European States with information support for an integrated and orderly return process.

104. In the wake of the violent civil disturbances in March 2004, the United Nations agencies in Kosovo established a system to address urgent humanitarian needs. In the period immediately following the March events, the number of newly displaced in Kosovo was estimated at 4,100, predominantly Kosovo Serbs. Nearly four months after the events, an estimated 2,700 people remain displaced in Kosovo pending the reconstruction of their houses. UNHCR, on behalf of the United Nations

country team, has coordinated the distribution of temporary food assistance and drawn upon its existing network to collect data, facilitate needs assessments and identify gaps in assistance. WHO, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, has worked to ensure the availability of medical supplies and has undertaken rapid health assessments, while UNICEF has assessed education needs for school-age children in all affected communities. UNDP has provided support to the Government-led reconstruction programme for housing damaged as a result of the March events. The humanitarian needs of those displaced in March are being addressed through the provision of food and temporary accommodation assistance and, to a lesser extent, reconstruction activities. Although the situation has stabilized, the United Nations country team remains attentive to the need for continued humanitarian assistance and for support to the Government in addressing the long-term issues that have come to the fore as a result of the March events.

Conclusions

105. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2005-2009 has incorporated remaining humanitarian issues into development objectives such as promoting human rights for all and improving the lives of all citizens, especially the most excluded and vulnerable. In Kosovo, the United Nations country team is implementing a strategic plan for Kosovo (equivalent to a United Nations Development Assistance Framework) devised according to the comments and priorities of the Government.

106. While solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and other marginalized groups are sought within broad community development, poverty reduction and social assistance strategies, governments at the republican and local levels are unable to meet their needs without the support provided by the international community for, and capacity-building in, social services, health systems and other institutions. Outside support would enable domestic bodies to assume a greater share of the burden in the period of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. More coordination is required between international development actors and government ministries to ensure that medium-term and longer-term solutions for the most vulnerable populations are addressed comprehensively as humanitarian programmes become a thing of the past.

Somalia

107. By its resolution 58/115 of 17 December 2003, the General Assembly, inter alia, urged the international community to provide as a matter of urgency humanitarian assistance and relief to alleviate in particular the consequences of the prevailing drought, and urged all States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to continue to implement previous resolutions in order to assist the Somali people in the rehabilitation of basic social and economic services.

Security conditions

108. Insecurity continued to prevail in many parts of Somalia in the period 2003-2004, especially the Galguduud region, the Belet Weyne district, Kismaayo, the Northern Gedo, Sool and Sanaag regions and in Mogadishu. In this context,

international aid agencies continued to work throughout Somalia, with the strongest presence being in the north, in "Somaliland" and "Puntland". Staff members of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations were victims of violent attacks and harassment, usually motivated by extortion or grievances related to money or property. Moreover, in the past year, at least four international aid workers have been killed in Somalia. In March 2004, an international aid worker and a Somali driver with the German Agency for Technical Assistance were killed by gunmen in "Somaliland". A German staff member was also injured in the attack. Following investigations, the "Somaliland" authorities claimed that Islamic militants were behind the killings.

109. The United Nations and many non-governmental organizations have enhanced their security measures in response to the increase in threats and attacks on international and national aid workers. In the longer term, the UNDP rule of law and security project will enhance the ability of the local authorities to provide security for international agencies. This process is already being implemented in "Somaliland", with support being given to a newly formed special police unit which will provide armed security for agencies.

Humanitarian issues

110. Over four years of consecutive drought in northern Somalia have led to massive livestock deaths and in some cases the collapse of pastoralism as a viable means of making a living. The drought triggered unprecedented water and food price increases, impacting upon the purchasing power of affected populations. The 2004 Gu (rainy) season was characterized by inadequate and erratic rainfall in much of the country, leaving the Sool plateau and the lower Nugal region (pastoral), the Gedo region (pastoral), the Juba riverine zone and the Galgaduud region as areas in crises. These areas continue to require emergency water trucking. Other areas of concern include the Hawd zone of Togdheer region, the northern Mudug, southern Nugaal, Hiraan, and Shabelle regions, and the Juba River basin. A comprehensive post-Gu food security analysis will be presented by the Food Security Analysis Unit in August.

111. United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations responded with short-term interventions during the period from November 2003 to June 2004. WFP distributed relief food of over 8,300 metric tons to drought-affected people in the Sool, Sanaag, Togdher, Bari and southern Mudug region. In the northern Gedo region, where conflict displaced an estimated 18,000 people in a chronically insecure area, UNICEF provided kits and water purification agents for internally displaced persons, and a group of international non-governmental organizations responded to health and nutrition needs. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations responded to the needs of persons displaced to the Bay region as a result of conflict in Baidoa; this group has now been able to return thanks to improved security. Chronic and acute food insecurity in the Juba Valley has also seen a coordinated response from the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and ICRC, including food aid, nutritional supplements, water and sanitation facilities and, recently, fishing kits to improve access to an important food source. ICRC and UNICEF (through the Somalia Red Crescent Society) provided basic health and other assistance to those displaced by the conflict in Galgaduud. All responses have been coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs through the Humanitarian Response Group of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body.

112. To improve the international humanitarian community's response capacity, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs established a humanitarian response fund in April 2004 with support from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Five emergency projects have been funded so far, addressing needs in the drought-affected areas of the north, in the Gedo region and the Juba Valley totalling $550,000.

Food security

113. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has provided returnees and internally displaced persons, women and children and minorities in the most food insecure areas with staple food crop seeds and farming hand tools. Other activities included the provision of vegetable, oil crop and legume seeds (cowpeas, mung beans, sunflower, sesame, sorghum and groundnuts) as part of a crop diversification programme. Small-scale irrigation pumps, animal traction equipment (ploughs and donkey carts) and processing equipment (grinding mills, oil presses) will be distributed during the remainder of 2004 to encourage labour-saving and income-generating activities.

Economic situation

114. To improve further the economic situation, the United Nations is supporting a project to establish a credible and recognized animal health certification for the export of livestock and the formation of a livestock products system (the Somali Livestock Board), which will help in convincing the importing countries to lift the ban imposed in 1997 followed by another in 2000.

115. The Promotion of Economic Recovery Project in Somalia of the International Labour Organization continued to create immediate short-term employment opportunities through its employment intensive infrastructure projects. In its second phase, this project has concentrated on developing tools and local institutions for addressing more long-term employment and development needs through local economic development. The first Local Economic Development and Appropriate Technology (LEDAT) Centre was established in north-west Somalia and a replica will soon open in north-east Somalia. By the end of 2003, 88,708 workdays of direct employment had been generated.

116. The International Civil Aviation Organization through its Civil Aviation Caretaker Authority for Somalia programme and in cooperation with UNDP, continued its operation of the flight information centre in Nairobi to provide for the safe conduct of air transport operations in the airspace allocated to Somalia, as well as air traffic and associated safety-related services at a number of airports in Somalia.

Tajikistan

117. By its resolution 57/103 of 25 November 2002, the General Assembly, inter alia, encouraged Member States and others concerned to continue to provide assistance to alleviate the urgent humanitarian needs of Tajikistan through the

consolidated appeals process and to offer support to Tajikistan for the post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction of its economy.

Regional context

118. Tajikistan is dependent on its neighbours for trade, transit and economic growth. Further improvement of cooperation with Uzbekistan, in particular, could have a strong impact. A first positive development is the dialogue, which began in the second quarter of 2004, about a possible marking and lifting of mines along the Tajik-Uzbek border.

119. The volatile situation in Afghanistan still hampers development in Tajikistan. Drug trafficking has been a major destabilizing factor, with the biggest opium harvests in recent history being reported in the north of Afghanistan. While aid channelled through Tajikistan into Afghanistan has been scaled back, small-scale trade across the border is picking up and increased stability in Afghanistan would allow for enhanced economic cooperation with Central Asia. A new bridge connecting the Gorno-Badakhshan region of Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan facilitates trade and transit. The Government of the United States of America is providing support for the construction of a new road bridge across the Pyanj River, close to the existing ferry point of Nijniy Pyanj.

120. The European Union Border Management Programme in Central Asia provides legal assistance, human resource development and training, and border management support at airports and in pilot regions. Recent negotiations between Tajikistan and the Russian Federation have led to the decision to phase the withdrawal of the Russian border forces through 2006. The implications of the handover are still under discussion. It is anticipated, however, that the resources of the Tajik forces will need to be strengthened substantially.

Socio-economic trends

121. The production of wheat and cotton increased further in 2003; nevertheless, many people continued to experience food insecurity, essentially due to poverty. Chronic malnutrition among children under five years of age remains almost unchanged at over 36 per cent. While the World Bank reports some improvements in reducing overall poverty, there are concerns that the very poorest have not yet benefited. Although officially recorded GDP grew by 10 per cent in 2003, it is expected to expand at a much slower pace once the economy regains its 1991 output levels. Growth will need to diversify in particular into the non-cotton agricultural sector and services of small enterprises to benefit the poor. Currently, one quarter of households still depends on the support of an estimated 500,000 labour migrants, whose remittances are thought to be equivalent to the sum of the Government's revenues.

122. Most of these labour migrants go to the Russian Federation which still holds a major stake in the Tajik economy. The Russian military is the second largest employer after the Government in Tajikistan. At a top-level bilateral meeting held in July 2004, a comprehensive agreement was reached, by which the Russian Federation will forgive most of the debt of Tajikistan (some $250 million) in exchange for a permanent grant of land for the Russian military base and ownership of the Nurek Space Observation Station, as well as substantial shares in hydropower projects.

123. The budget for 2003 totalled approximately $250 million, with 6 per cent devoted to health, 14 per cent to education and 10 per cent to social welfare, bringing total social sector spending to 7.3 per cent of GDP. However, total State expenditure on education and health in 2003 amounted to less than the country's annual debt service. Low salaries make it difficult for the social sector to attract and retain qualified professionals. Although the Government has increased allocations to the social sector by as much as 40 per cent, State funding still falls well short of needs.

124. Lack of access to productive resources, including land, seeds and water, remains the primary cause of food insecurity in Tajikistan. Land reform is ongoing, with more State farms to be privatized through 2005. The United Nations and a number of international non-governmental organizations have been asked to assist in monitoring the implementation of land reform.

125. Food purchases made to supplement own-production consume a large percentage of the cash income of poor households, curtailing access to other essential services, such as health care and education. The weakening capacity of families to look after their children has resulted in increasing numbers of street children and children involved in petty crime. Owing to the lack of appropriate social services, many such children are admitted to institutions or orphanages, of which there are currently 84 around the country housing some 11,000 children, an increase of 32 per cent since 1997.

Natural disasters

126. Despite being one of the most disaster-prone countries on earth, Tajikistan has limited national disaster management capacities. Over the first six months of 2003, natural disasters destroyed or damaged 4,000 homes and affected the lives of 30,000 people. National response efforts are hampered by a lack of resources, as well as poor communication and access to remote affected areas. Government efforts have almost exclusively focused on response to disasters, with little attention paid to mitigation and capacity-building. National coordination among all current and potential Government partners can be further developed, not least through the rapid reaction (REACT) coordination mechanism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is supported by the United Nations.

Security

127. Security continued to improve in 2003 and 2004, and the self-imposed restrictions on movements observed by many organizations have largely disappeared. The Government remains concerned, however, about a perceived rise in the number of followers of Hizb-i Tahrir, an extremist Islamic organization. The United Nations country team has reached minimum operating security standards, and the common United Nations communications centre ensures reliable around-the-clock radio communications in all parts of the country.

Government efforts

128. Following the adoption of the Government's poverty reduction strategy paper in 2002, there has been a growing emphasis on development. The first Millennium Development Goal report for Tajikistan was launched in October 2003, followed soon after by the strategic documents "Moving mountains: a United Nations

analysis of development challenges in Tajikistan" and "Moving mountains: a United Nations Framework for Development in Tajikistan".

129. The Government has engaged with the United Nations system and the Millennium Project in efforts to assess the needs to be met if Tajikistan is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. On the basis of this needs assessment, the Government will develop plans for scaling up domestic and international investments, together with the necessary institutional and policy changes. Further progress will be needed in regard to strengthening efficient, transparent decision-making and implementation, in particular in the tax system, courts and banking sector.

Donor response to the needs of the country

130. At the most recent meeting of the consultative group of donors, held in Dushanbe in May 2003, pledges totalled $900 million, including $200 million of humanitarian assistance for the period 2003 to 2005. The United Nations consolidated appeal for 2003 was well supported (79 per cent funding overall), however, health and water and sanitation projects were notably underfunded. For 2004, the United Nations country team developed a consolidated appeal for transition. The 2004 strategy covers mid-term structural support, while still addressing immediate humanitarian concerns.

131. At present, the United Nations is helping the Government to develop an innovative information platform to provide a consolidated overview of Tajikistan's needs and of the support offered. A first version of this information platform will be presented at the next donor meeting, to be held at the beginning of November 2004. Since the Government, donors and implementing partners will each maintain ownership of their sections of the platform, it will be consistently updated as further information becomes available.

Conclusions

132. Tajikistan is heavily reliant on international assistance. The Government's overall budget for 2003 totalled some $250 million out of an economy estimated at $1.4 billion for 6.5 million people. Overall international assistance in 2003 (both grants and loans) came to a similar amount.

133. Despite the overall improvement in security and positive economic growth indicators for the country as a whole, disparities are not diminishing. There has been little recent change in the humanitarian context for the most vulnerable groups. The coping mechanisms of communities are stretched far beyond their limits, and most of the population continues to live in severe poverty.

134. The goal of improving food security is being addressed through a multifaceted, inter-agency approach. Through regular coordination meetings convened in the capital and field-based cooperation, closer ties have been forged between agencies providing relief-oriented aid and those involved in development, community mobilization and credit initiatives.

135. There is a recognized need for a transition to a more open dialogue ahead of the forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections to be held in 2005 and 2006, respectively. The Government of Tajikistan has requested electoral assistance from the United Nations for the parliamentary elections in February 2005.

III. Observations

136. **In a number of countries covered in this report (namely Comoros, Mozambique, Serbia and Montenegro and Tajikistan), the crisis situation which gave rise to the provision of special economic assistance has essentially stabilized. While residual humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance from the international community may be required, these countries are well on the road to recovery and the bulk of international aid should be geared towards sustainable development. Accordingly, I recommend that, following the debate on special economic assistance to individual countries or regions at the current session, the Assembly no longer consider the situation in these countries under that agenda item.**

Notes

[1] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.